

LIGHT-HOUSE WORK TO BE DONE BY CONTRACT.

LETTER

FROM

THE ACTING SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

RELATING TO

THE LAW REQUIRING LIGHT-HOUSE WORK TO BE DONE UNDER CONTRACT.

JANUARY 30, 1902.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, January 28, 1902,

SIR: The following is an extract from the river and harbor appropriation act approved on August 11, 1888:

SEC. 3. That it shall be the duty of the Secretary of War to apply the money herein and hereafter appropriated for improvement of rivers and harbors other than surveys, estimates, and gauges, in carrying out the various works by contract or otherwise, as may be most economical, and advantageous to the Government. (See U. S. Stat. L., vol. 25, p. 423.)

The Light-House Board states that it has frequently happened, and in future is quite as likely to happen, that it costs more to do certain work by contract than it would to do it otherwise; that it takes much more time to do it by contract than it would to do it otherwise; that frequently a question of time is one of great importance to the work, and that it seems that it would be greatly to the interest of the Government to allow the same flexibility in doing light-house work that is allowed in doing river and harbor work.

The Board further states that it is exceedingly difficult and often impracticable in case of repairs to light-house structures to specify exactly what is to be done, as so much depends on conditions which can only be known as the structure to be repaired is opened up as the repairs proceed. Hence it is much preferable that such work be done otherwise than by contract.

The Board does not desire to build or repair light-house structures otherwise than by contract, when it is practicable to do the work by

contract, but it deems it to be for the best interests of the Government that it have authority to do work otherwise than by contract in those instances when it would be manifestly to the detriment of governmental interests to use the contract system.

It appears that certain officers of the Corps of Engineers who are engaged in river and harbor work are engaged, in addition, upon light-house work; that they carry on the two kinds of work from the same office, and that these officers find difficulty in doing the one kind of work entirely by contract, and in doing the other kind of work otherwise, when the same rule as to the necessity for economy of time and of money applies to both.

This Department, therefore, at the instance of the Light-House Board, has the honor to ask that a paragraph similar to that previously quoted may be embodied in the coming sundry civil appropriation bill at the end of that portion of it which makes appropriations for special works of a light-house nature, and that it may stand as follows:

That it shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Treasury to apply the money appropriated herein and hereafter for light-house purposes in carrying on light-house works by contract or otherwise, as may be most economical and advantageous to the Government.

Respectfully,

O. L. SPAULDING,
Acting Secretary

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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